

ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

MINUTES

April 24, 2001

Call to Order

Chairman Charles Lean called the spring meeting of the Governor's Alaska Council on Emergency Medical Services to order at 1:07 p.m. A quorum was present. ACEMS members Barbara Simonsen and Terry Buness were unable to attend.

Welcome and Introductions

ACEMS Members in Attendance:

Charles Lean, EMT, Chairman
Daniel Cox, EMT
Don Hudson, DO
Steve O'Connor, MICP
Teresa Stone, EMT
Dorothy Jones

State Section of Community Health and EMS Staff in Attendance:

Mark S. Johnson, Chief
Matt Anderson, Manager
Pat Carr, Health Program Manager
Shelley K. Owens, Health Program Manager
Doreen Risley, Health Program Manager
Martha Moore, Manager/Public Health Specialist
Zoann Murphy, H&SS Planner
Nadine R. Jones, Administrative Clerk
Raj Maskay, Poison Control/Public Health Specialist

EMS Regional Staff in Attendance:

Sue Hecks; *EMS Coordinator, Kenai Peninsula, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Dan Johnson; *Executive Director, Interior Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Gary Judd; *EMS Regional Coordinator, North Slope Borough Fire Dept.*
Bobbi Leichty; *Executive Director, Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Aggie Lie; *EMS Program Manager, Maniilaq Association*
Curt Madison; *EMS Coordinator, Director of Village Operation, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corp.*
Mike Owens; *EMS Director, Norton Sound Health Corporation*
Skip Richards; *EMS Coordinator, Chugachmiut*
Teresa Seybert; *EMS Coordinator, Bristol Bay, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Debbie McCravey; *Finance Manager, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Ronni Sullivan; *Executive Director, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To adopt the revised agenda of April 24, 2001.

(Dan Cox, Steve O'Connor)

ACTION: The motion was approved.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes from the October 6, 2000 meeting.
(Don Hudson, Dan Cox)

ACTION: The motion was approved.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES AND WORKING GROUPS

Executive Committee Report [Charlie Lean]

ACEMS received several letters from State Legislators expressing regret that they couldn't attend, including Representatives Richard Foster, Peggy Wilson, who is herself an EMT, and Ken Lancaster. The Commissioner and Director both promised to make an appearance. Charlie attended a teleconference on behalf of ACEMS regarding the proposed administrative budget cut to the Division and has taken phone calls over the past months regarding ACEMS activities.

CHEMS Section Report [Mark Johnson]

Mark described the activities of the Health Promotion Unit's Tobacco Control Program and the Behavioral Risk Survey and the assignment to CHEMS of Garry Lowry from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Garry focuses on cardiovascular health and may have an opportunity to obtain additional funds for the Take Heart Alaska Plan. CHEMS has a Preventive Health and Health Service block grant which is used to fund Health Promotion which unfortunately has taken cuts in the last two or three years. Another project called the Health Education Library Project, administered by Patty Owen, documents health education resources and puts them on-line for easier access.

The Rural Health and Primary Care Unit also has grown through federal grants. The Primary Care Cooperative Agreement focuses on access to primary care by rural and underserved populations around the state. Through the National Health Service medical students are placed in rural settings with the goal that some will decide to practice in rural settings. The Health Alert Network is a system to make health care providers aware of health emergencies immediately. It is funded primarily by bio-terrorism funding, but can be used in any public health emergency to alert medical and public health personnel. There is potential funding through Senator Stevens for Frontier Health which will be expanding and strengthening Primary Care around the state. There is funding for Telemedicine, to provide assistance to community health clinics and to supplement Community Health training and supervision. There are the EMS Grants which will be discussed, and finally, funding from the Denali Commission to help with clinic construction in rural areas.

EMS Communications

EMS communications is an area in which Mark continues to play a leading role. This past year CHEMS received \$241,600. from the Governor's capital budget to continue implementation of the Statewide Emergency Medical Communications Plan, which was developed under contract in 1997. The Governor has requested an additional \$341,600. which will be focused on the priorities of the 1997 plan plus additional leads that have been identified through the Code Blue Project.

The Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Project involves federal, state and local agencies and has a lot of potential for significantly improving statewide EMS communications. There is a capital budget request through the federal government to the legislature that would provide less than 10% towards a federal grant of 16 million dollars. Also, HB 186 is of interest to EMS. In 1994, legislation was passed which allows a

municipality to levy a fee on telephones, up to 50 cents in communities over 100,000 and up to 75 cents in communities under 100,000. That money has been used by approximately 20 communities around the state. The Federal Communications Commission has required that, by the fall of this year, wireless phone companies begin phasing in an enhanced 911 system which identifies the telephone number and location of a caller. HB 186 would expand the fee to wireless phones that already exist in some communities. The advantage of extending the enhanced 911 system to wireless phones will be to pinpoint the area of a crash in rural areas and in areas where multiple phone calls are received about an accident.

EMS Program Report [Matt Anderson]

Matt acknowledged Mark Johnson and the CHEMS staff for their hard work.

Code Blue Project

Matt described the origins and history of the Code Blue Project and the instrumental support of Commissioner Karen Perdue. Other support has come from Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer, Kevin Ritchie of the Alaska Municipal League and the Regions who queried their communities and worked very hard to provide information to upgrade the identified equipment needs in the database. A needs list was developed which the Denali Commission calls “infrastructure” needs: base station radios; antennas; clinic items, valued at \$501,000. Unlike many other sources of funding, this source does not require a match.

The Regions have applied for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants based on the needs identified in the Code Blue Project. Communities are not precluded from applying for USDA funds but Code Blue provides for one-stop shopping for grant funds. The USDA applications require some match and the Code Blue Project has been included in the Governor’s Capital Budget. Another piece of the Code Blue Project is the Rasmuson Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Anchorage which also wants to assist us. CHEMS and the Regions have submitted an application together, which is much larger than what was considered in the past. The Code Blue project continues to be a work in progress.

Mark Johnson wished to emphasize how much support the Project has gotten from Commissioner Perdue. She was the one who suggested approaching the Denali Commission and Senator Stevens, which resulted in discovery of the USDA Rural Development Fund, and she convinced the Governor’s office to add the matching funds. There has been an amazing amount of support from the Commissioner and the Lt. Governor on this. Matt Anderson commended the CHEMS team effort for Code Blue, including the work of Zoann Murphy who converted the raw data into a format which made it possible to do queries for the different proposals. Finally, in funding opportunities, the Health Resource Services Agency (HRSA) has earmarked \$500,000 for EMS training in Alaska and for the University of Alaska.

Rural Hospital Flexibility Program [Pat Carr]

The Rural Hospital Flexibility Program is doing well. There are 5 goals, one of which is to develop a rural health plan. Development and implementation of a rural health network offers interesting and exciting possibilities for working with the different segments of the health care continuum. Another goal is to look at EMS, the quality of care, and to measure program effectiveness. Matt then described the certification process for rural/critical care hospitals, funding issues, community needs assessment, and incorporation of the EMS communication plan. A key focus is the effort of the Training Committee to rewrite the EMS regulations and, in the next year, to provide technical assistance and specialty training for EMS providers for the rural health networks; to develop a newsletter that tells EMTs about the changes in the regulations; distribution of CD-ROMs to EMS instructors and administrators with modern case studies of EMS management issues; and to provide travel money for medical directors to increase their accessibility. The Rural Hospital Flexibility program is offering real benefits to EMS in Alaska.

Poison Control Report [Raj Maskay]

Many medical facilities have provided poison control in Alaska as an unfunded community service. Last year the U.S. Congress passed legislation to develop a national system of poison control centers, including a toll-free number, a campaign of public education, and money for assistance from a certified poison control center. EMS received a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau for one year to support poison control planning in Alaska. Alaska does not have a sufficient population to support its own certified poison control center and Oregon Poison Control Center was chosen to provide services for Alaska. It was recommended that the Oregon Center apply for federal funds from the HRSA for poison control services in Alaska. EMS will provide public education and develop a community resource guide. The combination of public education, the toll-free number and assistance from a certified poison control center will decrease the number of deaths from poisonings. The Oregon Poison Control Center will provide emergency poison information toll free 24 hours a days, seven days a week.

Pre-Hospital Data Collection Project [Shelley Owens]

25 computers and 37 packages of software have been distributed. Fairbanks will be purchasing software to support their computer-assisted dispatch system and laptop computers will be provided to Anchorage for their ambulances. Training funds aren't available but there have been some training opportunities staff has taken advantage of. The last few months have been spent testing the data upload system. There have been some software glitches but they have been ironed out. There is growing interest in the project.

Regional Directors and Coordinators' Report [Gary Judd]

The RD&C met in January for its winter work session and will meet on Thursday for its spring meeting. Projects include the Code Blue Project, a review of the System in Crisis paper, and discussion of alternate funding sources, the Global Star/Iridium phone situation and EMS billing.

EMS For Children [Doreen Risley]

Doreen handed out injury prevention booklets and presented Public Service Messages for the EMS-C and Injury Prevention Programs. The Medevac course is being updated and will be presented in a Power Point format distributed on a CD-ROM. There will be basic, advanced, commercial carrier and refresher programs and possibly a professional module.

State Symposium Planning [Doreen Risley]

Doreen described plans for the State EMS Symposium and EMS Week May 20th-26th. There is an EMS Week page on the website. She requested that agencies submit their activities for posting on the web page. Matt commended Doreen and the EMS-C Program and its funding of the weekly broadcast of the Public Health Training Network. This methodology will be used in the Fairbanks area when they get their smart classroom satellite network on line. Charlie mentioned recent articles on childhood obesity and childhood sugar intake and suggested these topics be addressed.

FAA Airport Access Improvements [Matt Anderson]

The aviation and health care industries are converging. The FAA recently finished a study about aviation access to remote locations in Alaska, written by John Madden. One of the recommendations of the report was to hold a summit meeting on aviation access and health care, which is scheduled for May 11th in Anchorage. The FAA will be discussing runway maintenance, ILS, GPS and lighting, and hopefully EMS personnel will be able to attend to make sure that emergency access to health care is discussed.

EMS Training Committee Report [Steve O'Connor]

The Training Committee met in Anchorage on January 9th and 10th. A summary of activities prepared by Matt was distributed, including conversion of the training matrix into regulations; standardized equipment lists; EMT III curriculum development; test security; review of a pediatric self-study module; and the Code Blue Project.

Regional EMS Reports

Interior Region [Dan Johnson]

The Code Blue Project has been the major emphasis for Interior Region. Dan complimented Matt on the work that he's been doing. Interior has been developing a system for twice-annual capital equipment needs assessment and comparing it to the State EMS Goals 2000 list. The Region is also developing a plan for site visits to provide technical assistance and needs assessment for training, equipment and services. In addition to the regular training program, Dave Rockney has been developing regional standing orders. The Borough has a new EMS coordinator who is working with the University of Alaska – Fairbanks to develop a paramedic-training program. Staff is working on the upcoming Symposium. With regard to communications, Interior is taking a wait-and-see attitude about the new radio system before developing a plan for improving its communications system. Through funding from the State office, a great achievement has been to include civilian radios on Army helicopters. Finally, the Interior Region Board of Directors conducted an extensive strategic planning process and developed a new mission statement and major goals.

Southern Region [Ronni Sullivan]

Code Blue is a huge project and a significant amount of effort has gone into it. In addition, the training schedule has increased and the Region conducts between 70 and 90 exams per year. Work on the State Symposium has also begun. A decision will need to be made whether to expand Symposium to include Wednesday. Finally, a particular challenge this year has been the increase in employee insurance costs. The increase has been devastating to Southern Region's budget.

Southeast Region [Bobbi Leichthy]

Southeast Region just completed its annual EMS Symposium and Board of Directors meeting. The theme for the Symposium was disasters, planned around the mass casualty plan the Region developed about a year and a half ago, which is available on the State website. The topic for the next Symposium will be cold water/near drowning and in conjunction, the Region will be revising the State Guidelines and presenting them during Symposium. Code Blue has been a unifying event for the Regional Directors and Coordinators. A Prince of Wales technical assistance site visit took place last summer, with some exciting results, including added ETT, EMT, Wilderness First Aid, and PEPP classes. The Prince of Wales EMS Council is being reorganized. Run data has been collected from the communities. Bobbi and Terry Bunnell attended EMS Day at the Legislature. A pediatric site visit is planned for Metlakatla and pediatric courses are planned for Juneau, Wrangell and Kake in the northern circuit; and Ketchikan, Craig, Thorne Bay, Whale Pass and Petersburg in the southern circuit.

North Slope Borough [Gary Judd]

North Slope has had a busy year with an increase in call volume in Barrow and the villages including elderly patients, routine transports and medevac calls. It's been a very busy training season. An EMS instructor has been hired. Potential legislative funding cuts are of concern. Although supportive of the Code Blue Project, the Region has chosen not to apply for its funds, choosing not to take away money from other Regions.

Northwest Arctic Borough Region [Aggie Lie]

Northwest Arctic Borough has been busy with the Code Blue project, a successful search and rescue for two lost girls, which increased the demand for arctic survival classes, EMS Week planning, a very successful Health Fair and a busy training schedule. The Region has leased an ambulance through the National EMS Endowment, paid for by GSA funding. The GSA pays for the maintenance and gas for up to 10 years.

Norton Sound Region [Mike Owens]

Norton Sound has been very busy. The number of responses to the north has greatly increased. There is concern over cancellation of a planned ATLS course and the risk that untrained physicians may pose to rural Alaskans. In a positive development, there is interest among a group of physicians, nurses and respiratory therapists for a pediatric preceptorship.

Yukon-Kuskokwim Region [Curt Madison]

At Yukon-Kuskokwim, the biggest issue is training. Four instructors train all the health aides in the Region as well as doing the EMS training. There is a very close relationship with the health aides in the Region and the really nice thing about the Code Blue Project is that it encourages everyone in the state to work together and to recognize the differences among the Regions. A goal is to encourage the people that know how to do things to keep doing their jobs.

Persons to be Heard

None.

Wrap up and Recess.

The meeting recessed at approximately 4:30 p.m.

ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

MINUTES
April 25, 2001

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Charles Lean called Day 2 of the Spring meeting of the Governor's Alaska Council on Emergency Medical Services to order at 9:05 a.m.

ACEMS Members in Attendance:

Charles Lean, EMT, Chairman
Daniel Cox, EMT
Don Hudson, DO
Steve O'Connor, MICP
Teresa Stone, EMT
Dorothy Jones

State Section of Community Health and EMS Staff in Attendance:

Mark S. Johnson, Chief
Matt Anderson, Manager
Shelley K. Owens, Health Program Manager
Doreen Risley, Health Program Manager
Martha Moore, Manager/Public Health Specialist
Zoann Murphy, H&SS Planner
Maria Bailey, Administrative Clerk
Nadine R. Jones, Administrative Clerk

EMS Regional Staff in Attendance:

Sue Hecks; *EMS Coordinator, Kenai Peninsula, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Dan Johnson; *Executive Director, Interior Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Gary Judd; *EMS Regional Coordinator, North Slope Borough Fire Dept.*
Bobbi Leichty; *Executive Director, Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Aggie Lie; *EMS Program Manager, Maniilaq Association*
Curt Madison; *EMS Coordinator, Director of Village Operation, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corp.*
Mike Owens; *EMS Director, Norton Sound Health Corporation*
Skip Richards; *EMS Coordinator, Chugachmiut*
Teresa Seybert; *EMS Coordinator, Bristol Bay, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Debbie McCravey; *Finance Manager, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*
Ronni Sullivan; *Executive Director, Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.*

Guests:

Fran Ulmer; *Lt. Governor, State of Alaska*
Karen Perdue; *Commissioner, Dept. of Health & Social Services*
Karen Pearson; *Director, Division of Public Health*

Injury Prevention Update [David Thomson]

David described Injury Prevention projects including: (1) Kids Don't Float Program: the Department of Public Safety purchased over \$10,000 worth of life jackets for distribution by the middle of May; (2)

Child Passenger Safety: car seat checks and four-day car seat technician courses are planned for Anchorage and Ketchikan; (3) Smoke Alarm Project: it is in its third and final year of the project. Mary Krom, Project Coordinator, is the 6th week of her smoke alarm installation effort. She has been targeting many low-income areas, mostly in the Muldoon and Mountain View area. Additionally, YKHC is also working on the same project in the Bethel area; (4) Pedestrian Safety: Walk to School Day focuses on pedestrian safety in the school and safe routes to school; (5) Safe Kids Coalitions: \$2,000 has been made available to each of seven coalitions in the state; (6) Grants to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (\$20,000) and Providence Alaska Foundation (\$15,000) for injury prevention projects; (7) Alaska State EMS Symposium: planning is underway for an injury prevention track, to include avalanche safety and suicide prevention; (8) Legislation: current legislative activities include bike helmet and snow machine legislation sponsored by Senator Ellis and a bill to establish a suicide prevention council supported by Senator Halford; (9) the Safe Communities Conference in Anchorage next month will provide a wide introspection on Injury prevention; and (10) CHEMS website: Maria Bailey is working on a calendar for the Injury Prevention site.

NEW BUSINESS

Membership Status; Nominations & Revisions to Bylaws

Proposed revisions to the ACEMS Bylaws by the Bylaws Committee were discussed and additional revisions proposed. Shelley Owens will distribute the proposed revisions to ACEMS prior to the Fall meeting for discussion and action.

Commissioner Karen Perdue

Commissioner Karen Perdue, Director Karen Pearson and Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer joined the meeting. The Commissioner complimented the EMS community for its cooperative effort in identifying EMS equipment and infrastructure needs, particularly related to the Code Blue Project and she discussed the issue of airport runways in small communities. Dan Johnson asked if the influx of federal funds might affect State support of EMS programs. The Commissioner responded that most of the federal funds were for equipment and supplies, rather than for training, and that State support of training needs would likely not be negatively affected.

Matt Anderson complimented the Commissioner on her support and enthusiasm for the Code Blue Project, her understanding and knowledge about EMS needs and issues, and her work with key people regarding the project. Charlie Lean thanked the Commissioner for her support of Code Blue and EMS generally. Matt noted that the department is involved in several parallel initiatives to improve health care access throughout the state (e.g., the Code Blue Project and the Frontier Health Project). He noted the health clinic on Prince of Wales Island is one where additional funding and support is needed.

A discussion ensued regarding HRSA grant funds, including use of a portion of the funds for EMS training needs. Gary Judd expressed his concerns about the proposed elimination of the designated BRUs and the proposed \$100,000 reduction to the CHEMS budget and asked if it would be appropriate for ACEMS to formally object to the \$100,000 proposed reduction. The Commissioner encouraged ACEMS to do so, both formally in writing, as well as private discussions with key legislators and their staffs.

Appointments to Task Forces and Committees

The following Task Force and Committee appointments were made: (1) Planning Task Force: Barbara Simonsen; (2) , EMS Training Committee: Robert Painter and Jean Rounds-Riley; (3) Public Information

and Education Task Force: Dorothy Jones and Zoann Murphy; (4) Ad Hoc Prevention Committee: Martha Moore was appointed Chair, with the following members: Terry Stone, David Thomson, Don Hudson, Vickie Green, and Barbara Simonsen.

Ken Brown, MD, emergency physician at Bartlett Regional Hospital, was nominated for the emergency/trauma physician ACEMS position previously held by Doctor Schlicht. Pat Chapman, a pre-hospital provider and EMS instructor from Meyers Chuck, was nominated to the ACEMS position for the prehospital provider residing in a community that is not connected by land or marine highway to a community in which a hospital is located. These two nominations will be forwarded to the Governor.

Charlie Lean raised the question of his role as a voting member of ACEMS committees. A discussion led to a proposed revision to the ACEMS Bylaws stating that the Chair would be a voting member of the Executive Committee, and an ex officio member of all other ACEMS committees. The proposed revision was accepted and will be voted on at the Fall meeting with the other revisions to the Bylaws.

Alaska Trauma Registry Report [Martha Moore]

Martha summarized the Alaska Trauma Registry (ATR) Program. The next Trauma Registry Review Committee meeting will be held on June 4th. The ATR program is integrating a new software program that has caused some problems and slow-down in the collection of data. All old data will be converted to the new program and current data collection is about 80% complete. Zoann Murphy has been hired to a position in the Injury Prevention Program. Martha continues to share data with a wide variety of agencies, including injury prevention partners, Safe Kids organizations, the U.S. Coast Guard, and others. There is a high degree of interest in snow machine injuries (and the need for required helmet use).

Public Information and Education (PIE) Task Force Report [Skip Richards]

Skip described preparation of the EMS poster that includes the names of all EMTs and EMS instructors in the state and was displayed at the State and Regional Symposiums. EMS at the Legislature Day was successful. PIE is considering developing a public information brochure which would provide basic information about EMTs and brochures about EMS training and continuing education. PIE funds might be used to purchase single-use cameras for distribution to EMS services for public information purposes. PIE has materials about the Comfort One Program, which few people understand. Finally, Skip requested childhood photos be submitted for use at the State Symposium, which will be returned afterwards.

Planning Task Force [Matt Anderson]

The Planning Task Force has discussed the state's poison control project, educational informational materials for medical directors, and setting up a web page process. It also recommends that the Funding Task Force, which arose from the strategic planning session last year, not be formed. Matt said he was disappointed in the strategic planning session and that it didn't result in any clear deliverables that would allow for improvement. A motion was passed unanimously to disband the Funding Task Force.

REGIONAL EMS GRANT PRESENTATIONS

The seven EMS Regions provided written reports and made presentations about their needs and program successes.

GRANT PROPOSAL REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Matt described the history of the involvement of ACEMS in State grant funding recommendations, changes in that role and the current process. The allocation of grant funding to the Regions has remained proportionately the same for many years. Mark Johnson discussed the debate around funding distribution back in the 1980s. He noted that the current funding allocation was accepted by most, and that there is great benefit in the stability and predictability that has evolved. He also said that if there is anyone who is strongly opposed to the current funding allocation, or the process leading to the funding allocation, that they are free to express their opinions to the Commissioner, who makes the final decisions regarding grant funding—that whoever makes the grant recommendations, be it ACEMS, CHEMS staff, or a proposal evaluation committee, they are just that, recommendations.

Charlie Lean complimented the Regions on their FY 02 grant proposals. ACEMS then voted unanimously to (1) support a grant funding allocation the same as the previous state fiscal year; to (2) submit a letter to the Legislative Finance Committees to restore the proposed \$100,000 reduction to the CHEMS operating budget; (3) draft a letter supporting a 25 percent increase in the CHEMS operating budget; and (4) draft a letter to the Department of Health & Social Services commending the department.

SELECTION OF DATES FOR NEXT MEETING

October 4 and 5, 2001, were selected for the next ACEMS meeting in Anchorage.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.